

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Advisory #2: Update on Influenza Vaccine Supply and Steps to Ensure Access to Vaccine to Those in Priority Groups

TO: Health care providers involved in the administration of influenza vaccine and those who may have patients seeking a vaccine

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In this Advisory:

- **UPDATE** Supply and distribution of influenza vaccine for the 2005–06 flu season and alert that Chiron will produce less vaccine than projected
- **UPDATE** Availability of influenza vaccine for Vaccine for Children (VFC) Providers
- **NEW** Steps to assess gaps in vaccine supply
- **NEW** Steps to ensure access to vaccine to those in priority groups

UPDATE - Supply and distribution of influenza vaccine for the 2005–06 flu season and alert that Chiron will produce less vaccine than projected

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), four manufacturers are supplying influenza vaccine to the U.S. for the 2005-06 flu season. All four of the manufacturers are producing different quantities of their vaccine, and distributing their products on different timetables:
 - **sanofi pasteur** expects to produce 60 million doses of vaccine this season, and is providing customers with partial shipments now (20% of an order, for example) and plans to fill the remainder of each order in the coming weeks.
 - **GlaxoSmithKline** expects to produce 7.5 million doses this season. Anyone who did not place an order with sanofi pasteur and ordered through a distributor may have received some vaccine already (GlaxoSmithKline or sanofi pasteur brand) or should receive vaccine in the coming weeks.
 - **Chiron ALERT** - Chiron's product, Fluvirin[®], has been delayed due to production problems and is just now becoming available for distribution. However, Chiron announced earlier this week that it will not produce even as many as 18 million doses this season. Earlier it had projected distributing 18 to 26 million doses. Chiron now does not make any estimate of how many doses of vaccine it will ultimately produce this season or its timetable for distribution.

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- **MedImmune FluMist®** - Anyone who ordered the nasal-spray vaccine appears to be receiving their orders in a timely way. MedImmune expects to distribute 3 million doses of its product this season.
- According to CDC, up to 90 million doses could potentially be distributed this season in the U.S., compared to only 61 million doses distributed last year.

UPDATE - Availability of influenza vaccine for Vaccine for Children (VFC) Providers

- The Vermont Department of Health has already received and distributed 40 percent of its order of influenza vaccine to VFC-enrolled providers. We expect to receive and distribute the remaining vaccine by mid-November.

NEW - Steps to assess gaps in vaccine supply

- Because each manufacturer has different production and distribution timetables, and the number of doses of vaccine Chiron will produce and its distribution timetable is still uncertain, there are gaps now in the availability of vaccine and these gaps are likely to continue. This situation may cause delays in getting people in priority groups vaccinated.
 - **These gaps may be more significant in Vermont.** Based on what was learned during the response to last year's vaccine shortage as well as what we know about the how vaccine was ordered this year, it is likely that some hospitals, nursing homes, Visiting Nurses Association (VNA)/Home Health Agencies, as well as individual provider offices had to order vaccine from Chiron again this year. As a result, these organizations and agencies may have received little or no vaccine as yet. Furthermore, it is unclear how much vaccine they will ultimately receive and the timing of its distribution.
 - **To better assess the current and projected supply of vaccine in state,** the Vermont Department of Health and our many partners are conducting a survey of all hospitals, nursing homes and VNA/Home Health Agencies. This information will inform the Health Department, our partners and the public on where there are gaps in supply, guide any decision-making processes, and help to determine where additional vaccine might be targeted. These surveys will be repeated over the next months as necessary.

NEW - Steps to ensure access to vaccine to those in priority groups

- Given the uncertainties in available doses of influenza vaccine and the timing of its distribution, CDC has previously recommended that only those in priority groups receive influenza vaccine until October 24, 2005. After that date, all persons would be eligible to receive the vaccine. The priority groups are:

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- persons aged ≥ 65 years
- residents of long term care facilities
- persons aged 2-64 years with co-morbid conditions
- children aged 6-23 months
- pregnant women
- health-care personnel who provide direct patient care
- household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children aged < 6 months

NOTE: This prioritization does not apply to FluMist[®], which should be used only with healthy non-pregnant persons aged 5 to 49.

- However, given the continued uncertainties in the supply of vaccine in Vermont, providers might consider taking steps to ensure that people who fall within one or more priority groups have access to vaccine:
 - **Providers who have vaccine** might consider deferring vaccination of persons who are NOT in one or more of the priority groups until such time as their own supply is adequate to meet the needs of those in the priority groups. Providers might also work within their own organizations or agencies to move vaccine to meet the needs of those in priority groups.
 - **For providers who currently have no vaccine or only a limited supply** and are therefore not able to meet the needs of all those persons in one or more of the priority groups, please inform your patients there may be other options available for them to receive vaccine (e.g., through one of more community-based clinics). Also please inform your patients that vaccinations can still be effective even if given into late November and December (when supplies are expected to increase). The influenza season typically doesn't peak until January or February.

Providers with questions related to this Advisory are encouraged to call 800 464-4343. Also please refer to the Vermont Department of Health website: www.healthyvermonters.info for important information and updates related to influenza and influenza vaccine.